

JOONDALUP CITY COUNCIL, GOVERNMENT'S POSITION

1380. Mr A.P. O'GORMAN to the Acting Premier:

Will the Acting Premier advise the House of the State Government's position on the Joondalup City Council?

Mr E.S. RIPPER replied:

The Government is very concerned about the public spectacle in the Joondalup council. The Minister for Local Government and Regional Development has set a deadline of today for the council to resolve its problems. He has advised me that he will announce his decision tomorrow. There cannot be any question that the affair has dented public confidence in the Joondalup council. It has probably harmed the reputation of local government in general. It must also be acknowledged that it has brought into disrepute the Western Australian Liberal Party faction that dominates the council. I would like to look at what members opposite have been engaged in with regard to this matter. I would like to examine the ducking and weaving of members opposite. I would like to share with members one of the most extraordinary interviews by a shadow minister this year. It was an interview on the ABC *Drive* program yesterday afternoon given by the shadow Minister for Local Government. When asked by John McNamara whether the shenanigans at the Joondalup council were an embarrassment to the Liberal Party, the member for Greenough said -

I don't think it necessarily is John, no. I mean, the council is a council... and... it's an autonomous body and... the make-up of it, politically, should neither be here nor there.

McNAMARA

But nevertheless, they are associated with the Liberal Party?

EDWARDS

I... (inaudible) yep...

McNAMARA

... Yeah... you accept that?

EDWARDS

Yep.

McNAMARA

So it's not a good look?

EDWARDS

Look, that's a... for others to judge, I mean, if that's the way people see it, so be it.

The member was then asked whether he thought the council should sack the CEO. He said -

I think the time has come when... the Minister has to make that decision, but... the Minister, unfortunately, doesn't have the power to that of course, that is... an issue for other people.

What do members make of the idea the minister should sack the CEO even though he does not have that power? That is an extraordinary position from the shadow Minister for Local Government .

Mr R.F. Johnson interjected.

Mr E.S. RIPPER: Members opposite are a bit sensitive. John McNamara asked the shadow minister whether he had spoken to the Joondalup CEO about the matter, and the shadow minister responded -

A long time ago... I've... very purposely... kept at some arms length of it...

... for one thing I'm not the Minister... the other thing I do respect, as I said earlier on, the auto-management of local government, I think they are automotive bodies... or autonomous bodies, and they should be given the opportunity of trying to sort it out...

At the same time as the member says the minister should intervene, he says that the council should be given the opportunity to sort it out. Unfortunately for the Liberal Party, it gets even better. The shadow minister concluded with this penetrating self-analysis -

I think if... if waded in there as well it would probably just muddy the waters even more.

Of course it would, given that sort of performance in the interview. The problem is that on this issue the Liberal Party is like a rabbit in the spotlight. Members opposite do not know where to hide. One thing is certain: every Western Australian now knows that a Liberal Party faction bears responsibility for the complete breakdown of local government in Joondalup.

Mr R.F. Johnson: The truth will come out when we have the inquiry and people are on oath.